




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2025

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Chapman, Mrs YA

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (10.02 am): I rise to address the motion of condolence, as moved by the Premier, recognising the extraordinary service rendered to the state of Queensland by the late Yvonne Ann Chapman. Yvonne Chapman, the former member for Pine Rivers, was a trailblazer, a woman of immense resolve and a proud servant of Queensland and the Pine Rivers community.

Born in Brisbane on 20 January 1940, Yvonne Chapman's story is one of humble beginnings, deep connection to her community and a lifelong dedication to public service. Raised on a dairy farm at Youngs Crossing, she was the eldest of five children. At age 14, Yvonne Chapman had to take on significant family responsibilities, including caring for her siblings and her ailing mother, who required daily medical attention.

Yvonne Chapman began her working life as a secretary at the Petrie Paper Mill, where she met her husband, Graeme. They married in 1957 and went on to raise two children, Wendy and Greg. Yvonne also became a partner in her husband's steel fabricating business. I take this opportunity to acknowledge both Wendy and Greg and all family members who are present here in the gallery.

Yvonne's entry into public life came in 1976 when she was elected to the Pine Rivers Shire Council, beginning a political career that would span more than 30 years. She served as a councillor until 1985 and later returned as mayor, but it was her election to the Queensland parliament in 1983 that made history.

Yvonne Chapman won the seat of Pine Rivers for the National Party, unseating the then Liberal MP Rob Akers. Her victory was instrumental in allowing the National Party to form government in its own right. In the 44th Parliament of Queensland, she had the distinguished honour of moving the address-in-reply debate to the Governor's speech and, in doing so, she gave her maiden speech to the House.

On 31 January 1986, Yvonne Chapman became Queensland's first female cabinet minister when then premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen appointed her Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs. Yvonne Chapman later served as Minister for Family Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs and subsequently as Minister for Transport and Ethnic Affairs under Premier Russell Cooper.

Yvonne Chapman was not just the first woman in cabinet; she was a bold, principled voice in a male-dominated political landscape. Yvonne Chapman was known for her conservative values, her passionate defence of the family unit and for standing up for what she believed in, no matter how unpopular. Beyond her ministerial responsibilities, she participated in the parliamentary delegation to Japan, Hawaii and the United States in 1985 and was a member of the Printing Committee and the Refreshment Rooms Committee.

After leaving state parliament in 1989, and following a bid in the Nundah by-election in 1991, Yvonne returned to local government in 1994, again defeating Rob Akers—this time to become the first mayor of Pine Rivers Shire. Due to legislative changes, Yvonne Chapman was also its last mayor. She was re-elected decisively in 1997 and 2000, and was unopposed in 2004. She led the shire until its amalgamation in 2008.

Yvonne Chapman was also a long-serving and long-standing member and patron of numerous community organisations, supporting local sports, emergency services and civic associations. She was at one point considered a contender for Queensland Governor and was even approached by multiple political parties to run federally. However, she remained devoted to serving her local community.

Yvonne Chapman was a pioneer for women in Queensland politics—a proud conservative, a staunch advocate for her community and a woman of great personal strength and conviction. She brought the same determination to politics that she had brought to her family life. She believed in people taking responsibility, in strong families and in the power of service.

On behalf of this House, I extend my condolences to Yvonne Chapman's family, particularly Wendy and Greg, and to all those who knew and loved her. Her passing marks the end of an era, but her legacy lives on in the history of this Queensland parliament, the Pine Rivers community and in the many lives she touched. Vale, Yvonne Chapman.